

Although the incidence of infection in the United States has declined over the past several decades, there are still tens of thousands of people every year who are infected with hepatitis. Furthermore, Americans approaching retirement come from a generation before the hepatitis B vaccine and before treatment for hepatitis C was developed. Seniors, immigrants and children of immigrants from countries with high endemic infection rates of viral hepatitis, African Americans and Asian American and Pacific Islanders are particularly vulnerable. A recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association ([found here](#)) makes the strong point that a robust federal policy approach is needed.

My bill will increase the authority of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support state health departments in their prevention, immunization and surveillance efforts. The CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis has been dramatically underfunded in comparison with other CDC programs within the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. Increasing the authority of the Division will help to boost the argument for increased funding. This legislation is an important step forward and I look forward to the passage of the bill.

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